

Chapter Eleven

Community Facilities

Overview

In addition to the transportation system and the water and sewer service discussed in Chapters 9 and 10, a wide range of public and private community facilities are available in the City of Westminster.

These facilities include schools, child care, a public library, facilities for senior citizens, public safety and emergency services, communications facilities, government facilities, parks, and cultural facilities. Community facilities are provided by the City, Carroll County, the State of Maryland, the federal government, and private organizations.

Schools and Colleges

The public school system is managed by the Carroll County Board of Education and funded by the County and the State of Maryland. As a result, Westminster residents are served by schools located both within the corporate limits and outside of the City.

The Board of Education has a ten year *Facilities Master Plan* for schools, which is reviewed and revised annually based on enrollment projections, budget realities, and other factors. The construction schedule of new schools is not within the control of the Board of Education, but relies on funding from the Board of Carroll County Commissioners and the State.

Districts for the Westminster area elementary schools for kindergarten through grade five include Charles Carroll, Friendship Valley, Robert Moton, Westminster, Cranberry Station and William Winchester. Pre-kindergarten programs are available at Robert Moton and William Winchester Elementary Schools. The elementary schools range in capacity from 325 to 600 students, for a total elementary capacity of 3,300 students. Most of the Westminster area elementary schools are currently under capacity.

East Middle and West Middle are the two middle schools serving the Westminster area, and both of these schools provide special education programs. Enrollment projections indicate that East Middle is expected to remain below capacity, West Middle is also under capacity and the current trend indicates that middle school enrollment will remain constant over the next ten years.

There are two high schools serving Westminster area students, which also houses special education programs. Winters Mill High School with a capacity of 1,240 students and Westminster High School, with a capacity of 1,921 students, was at 111% capacity (211 students over capacity) in September 2002 and projected to be at 102% capacity (42 students over capacity) at the beginning of the 2003/04 school year. As referenced above, Winters Mill High School was opened for the 2002/03 school year. This facility will further alleviate the overcrowding at Westminster High School as it fully incorporates the nine through twelve grade levels. It is projected that Westminster

High School will be under the State Rated Capacity during the 2004/05 school year and beyond. Close coordination between the City of Westminster and Board of Education will be necessary to ensure that Westminster's growing population is adequately served by the public school system.

Carroll County high school students also have the option to attend the Vo-tech Center located adjacent to Westminster High School. Students at the Vo-tech learn the skills necessary to obtain employment after graduating from high school.

Carroll Community College is located south of Westminster on Maryland Route 32, and is fully accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. The College offers classes year round to both students seeking Associates Degree and continuing education students.

Carroll Community College also offers specialized training to individual businesses in Westminster and Carroll County. The College offers a program that designs individualized training programs and guides local employees through that program. This critical function ensures that local businesses are afforded the opportunity to employ "Best Practices" when conducting its business.

As a result of the aging population in Westminster and Carroll County, there is a critical shortage of qualified nurses in Westminster, as well as Carroll County. In response to this shortage, Carroll Community College, through funding from the State of Maryland has recently begun construction on the Allied Nursing Facility on its campus on Washington Road. This center will provide much needed relief to the health care providers in the area that currently are not able to fill its nursing needs due to a critical shortage.

In addition to the public schools described above, there are several private schools in the Westminster area. These include the Carroll Christian Schools, Community Baptist Church School, Crest Lane Seventh Day Adventist Church School, Montessori School of Westminster, and St. John's Catholic Elementary.

A private college is located within the Westminster City limits as well. Founded in 1867 McDaniel College (formerly known as Western Maryland College) is a four-year liberal arts college with approximately 1,200 full-time undergraduate students. The College also attracts 5,000 graduate students who attend classes primarily part-time and during the summer.

Child Care

Daily child care is provided by private individuals and organizations throughout Westminster. The Carroll County government has a day-care facility available to County employees, and several day-care centers are located in area churches.

In addition to daily child care, before and after-school child care programs are available. Three of the Westminster area elementary schools have before and after-school programs: Friendship Valley, Robert Moton, and Westminster Elementary Schools. These programs are organized by private day

care providers, which lease space in the schools from the Board of Education. In addition, the City of Westminster Recreation Department sponsors an after-school program for middle school students. Facilities are located on Longwell Avenue and include a gymnasium, game rooms, and a study area.

Libraries

The Westminster Branch of the Carroll County Public Library system is located on Main Street. The library houses a large collection of popular reading and reference materials for children, young adults, and adults. In addition, the library offers extensive programs for children of all ages. Bookmobile van service to children in day care is also available on an outreach basis for the residents of Westminster and Carroll County.

The Board of Library Trustees has a long-term plan to expand the Westminster facility to enlarge and enhance service to children. Carroll County Public Library has the highest circulation per capita in Maryland and ranks 11th out of 8,946 libraries nationally.

Resources on local history are also available at the Historical Society library located at 210 East Main Street. Members of the Historical Society may use the library free of charge. Non-members are charged a nominal fee for use of the library.

The most extensive research library in Westminster is located at McDaniel College. The library is open to the general public; however, only students and faculty are permitted to borrow materials.

Facilities for Senior Citizens

Just outside the City's limits is the County's recently completed senior center. It is located on Stoner Avenue, near the Carroll County General Hospital. At the Center, seniors can obtain services through the County's Bureau on the Aging, including financial advice, legal aid, and health insurance counseling. Other activities and events for senior citizens are offered at the Senior Center as well, and the building is available for public and community meetings. Adult day care for the developmentally disabled is also available.

The City renovated the West End School, located on Schoolhouse Avenue, for use as a Senior Center. The center opened during the summer of 1998. Residential apartments for seniors are available in the West End School building, and adult day care is offered, as well as other related services.

In addition to these senior centers, there are a number of private senior living facilities located in and around the City of Westminster, such as Carroll Lutheran Village, Locust House, Timber Ridge, and Tremont Place. Many other facilities are currently being planned in the Westminster Area as there is a growing need for these services.

The City of Westminster recently adopted the "Housing for Older Persons" Ordinance to address the growing number of persons over the age of 55 that do not need age related services, but desire to move to a condominium community that has age restrictions. The City has already approved one of

these projects that is projected to open during the summer of 2004. By providing this type of housing, the City is also promoting homeownership opportunities to younger individuals that may not be able to afford a new single family detached unit, yet can afford a housing unit previously occupied by a resident who chooses to purchase a smaller condominium unit in an age restricted development.

Public Safety and Emergency Services

There are three levels of police protection provided in the City of Westminster. The City has its own Police Department, which is based at the intersection of Locust Street and Emerald Hill Lane. As currently staffed, there is approximately one City police officer for every 403 Westminster residents, a level of protection that should be maintained as the City of Westminster population grows. At any given time, there are several City police officers on duty. Secondary police protection is provided by the Maryland State Troopers. The Carroll County Sheriff's Department also has some jurisdiction within the City.

The local jail, the Carroll County Detention Center, is located on Court Street. Currently, the Detention Center has the capacity for 244 offenders. The maximum stay for any offender in this facility is eighteen months.

Emergency services are provided by the Westminster Fire Engine and Hose Company No. 1 and Carroll County General Hospital. The Westminster Volunteer Fire Company is a private organization that receives some funding from the City of Westminster and Carroll County, as well as through private donations and fundraisers. The Fire Company moved into its new facility on John Street in October 1998. Ambulance service is also provided by the Westminster Volunteer Fire Company, and a fully staffed emergency room is located at the Carroll County General Hospital on Memorial Avenue, near South Center Street and Gist Road. Consideration of additional paid emergency services staff might become necessary as the population in the Westminster area continues to grow.

Communications Facilities

Communications facilities in the Westminster area are privatized and include telephone service, local and regional television and radio stations, and cable television service. In addition, some areas will be provided with fiber optic cable when the cable company constructs an expected upgrade to the local cable system. Fiber optic cable is capable of providing more reliable, faster, and advanced communications. The City has also entered into numerous contracts with cellular phone providers to place cellular phone antennas on the City's water tanks.

Government Facilities

There are a number of government facilities in the Westminster area, ranging from local to federal government facilities. City of Westminster government offices include City Hall, which houses the Mayor's office, City Clerk, and Planning and Public Works Department; the Police Department; the Longwell Municipal Center, where the Recreation Department is located; and the City Maintenance

Shop, where the Street Department is based. In addition, the City rents office space in the Winchester West Building for the Finance Department and Housing and Personnel. Additional City government facilities are described elsewhere in the Comprehensive Plan and include the Wastewater Treatment Plant, the Water Plant, several wells and reservoirs (*Carroll County Water and Sewerage Master Plan*), public parking lots (*Chapter 9, Transportation*), and parks and other recreation facilities (this chapter).

In September 2003, the City of Westminster opened two parking garages for use by the general public. The Longwell Avenue Municipal Garage has 296 parking spaces that can be used by monthly permit or on an hourly basis. This parking facility is located at the intersection of Longwell Avenue and Distillery Drive. The Westminster Square Parking Garage is a 160 space parking garage that is located on West Green Street, near the intersection with MD Route 27. This garage is also available to the public for monthly permits, as well as hourly parking.

Carroll County government offices are located in an office complex located on North Center Street and Court Street, comprising three office buildings. Other County office buildings are located on South Center Street near South Court Street. The County government provides the community with services related to permitting, planning, development review, economic development, health services, County road maintenance, and a County landfill. Other County facilities include the Carroll County Maintenance Center on Meadow Branch Road to the north of Westminster, the Agricultural Center on Smith Avenue, and parks and recreation facilities located around Westminster and throughout the County. The Carroll County Detention Center, County Court House, and Court House Annex are located on Court Street. In addition to the County judicial branch, the Court House also houses the land records, licensing, Register of Wills, and Law Library.

The majority of State offices and facilities are located in Annapolis and Baltimore City; however, there are several State facilities located in and around Westminster. A branch of the State Assessment office is located in downtown Westminster in the Winchester Exchange building on East Main Street, while local unemployment services are provided at an office in the Air Business Center on Maryland Route 97. Also, at the Air Business Center, is a State vehicular emissions testing station. On the outskirts of Westminster along Maryland Route 140 are facilities for the Maryland State Police and a full service Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) facility.

Federal government facilities in the Westminster area are minimal. They include the Post Office located on Woodward Avenue and the Social Security Office on East Green Street.

Recreation

There are a number of recreation facilities in the City of Westminster. Recreation opportunities are available at several City parks (Table 11.1), the Westminster Municipal Pool, the Family Recreation Center, and local school grounds. In addition, there are a number of recreation areas located in the parks and school grounds on the outskirts of the City.

The City's Municipal Swimming Pool is located on Royer Road in The Greens. The swimming area is open from Memorial Day to Labor Day and features an Olympic size pool, wading pool, pavilion,

tot lot, and sand volleyball court. Swimming lessons are offered at the Municipal Pool, and participation on the City swim team is available as well.

The Family Recreation Center, sponsored by the City, is located in the Longwell Municipal Center. Membership is open to City residents and offers a variety of recreation programs and equipment. Facilities include a cardiovascular area, gymnasium, Teen Center, babysitting room, and locker rooms with showers. The Westminster Recreation Department is responsible for organizing year-round recreation activities for both children and adults. Other recreation programs are available through the public schools and the YMCA located south of Westminster on Maryland Route 32.

Most of the school grounds in the vicinity of Westminster contain several playing fields, as well as ball diamonds and basketball courts. Playgrounds are located at area elementary schools, while tracks can be found at East Middle School, Winters Mill High School and Westminster High School. In addition, all of the public schools contain gyms or multi-purpose rooms, and the high school has several auditoriums. Public school facilities are available for public use during non-school hours.

Recreation facilities are also available for public use at McDaniel College, when the facilities are not being used for college related activities. Facilities at McDaniel College include tennis courts, playing fields, racquetball courts, a track, golf course, swimming pool, and ball diamond. The College also has conference facilities that are available for general use.

In addition to the existing recreation facilities described above, the Dutterer Family Park on Winters Alley, opened in 1999. Other projects are being planned for the Wakefield Valley area, including the Fenby Farm Quarry and Lime Kiln Park, an interpretive, historical park, and the Wakefield Valley Community Trail, planned to ultimately traverse three miles and will link the Fenby Farm Quarry and Lime Kiln Park to residential areas, as well as the newly reconstructed Uniontown Road. As the remaining land in Westminster becomes developed to accommodate the projected population growth, consideration must be given to reserving additional lands for recreational use. The City has adopted a cluster subdivision ordinance which provides a density bonus to developers that preserve sensitive areas as well as providing active recreation space within the development.

Cultural Facilities

Cultural events and facilities are provided by a variety of organizations in the Westminster area. These include the City of Westminster Department of Recreation, the Carroll County Arts Council, and the local schools and colleges, among others.

The Westminster Department of Recreation, in addition to its recreation related duties, is responsible for organizing a number of special events throughout the year. The Flower and Jazz Festival is held on the Saturday before Mother's Day, Art in the Park takes place in June, a Month of Sundays Concert Series runs through July, and Fallfest occurs in September. All of these events feature a variety of musical entertainment, while Art in the Park provides local artists with the opportunity to display and sell their works.

The Carroll County Arts Council, affiliated with the Carroll County Recreation and Parks Department, is based in the Carroll Theatre. This reconstructed facility opened in 2001 and has provided the Arts Council greater visibility for its cause as well as provided a significant reinvestment in Westminster's Historic West Side Neighborhood. The purpose of the Arts Council is to promote all areas of the arts. This is accomplished through programs in the schools, libraries, and senior centers and through the sponsorship of trips to cultural events in Maryland and other states. Events are also held in local parks and neighborhoods. In addition, the Carroll County Arts Council publishes a cultural directory for the County.

Cultural activities are available at the local schools and colleges as well. The public school system introduces students to music, art, and drama with a variety of required and elective classes. Students who participate in the arts programs in the public schools are also provided with many opportunities to perform.

A similar situation is found at Carroll Community College and McDaniel College. Both of these institutions provide instruction in the arts. McDaniel College, in particular, provides opportunities for both students and members of the community to participate in instrumental music and theatrical groups. Cultural events are scheduled regularly at McDaniel College throughout the year. Carroll Community College enhances its fine arts instruction with student interest clubs for fine arts and drama.

Solid Waste Disposal Service

Residential solid waste disposal service is provided to all City residents, with the exception of those living in multi-family complexes. Owners of multi-family housing with more than three units must arrange for private solid waste disposal service for their buildings. The City has a five year contract with BFI, Incorporated for regular pick-up of trash and recyclables. BFI provides once per week service to City residents. Westminster residents are able to recycle paper and cardboard, glass, aluminum, and some types of plastics, thus reducing the amount of solid waste sent to the landfill.

In addition to the services provided by BFI, the City of Westminster provides curbside pick-up of yard waste once a week from April through November. City crews also remove bulk trash items, such as worn-out appliances, from residential areas on an appointment basis. Yard waste recycling, in combination with curbside pick-up of recyclable materials, has reduced Westminster's solid waste stream by approximately 35%.

Table 11.1. City of Westminster Parks (continued on following page)

| Type of Facility | Belle Grove Square | Bishop Garth Park | Charles Street Playground | City Playgro und | Dutterer Family Park | Fenby Farm Park |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| Playground | | X | X | X | X | |
| Park benches | X | X | | X | | X |
| Pavilion | | | | X | X | |
| Restrooms | | | | | X | |
| Paths or trails | | | | | X | X |
| Playing field | | | | X | X | |
| Ball diamond | | | | X | X | X |
| Basketball court | | | | X | | |
| Tennis court | | | | X | | |
| Fitness equipment | | | | | | |
| Ice skating rink (seasonal) | | | | | X | |
| Swimming pool | | | | | | |
| Interpretive displays | | | | | | X |

Table 11.1 (cont.). City of Westminster Parks

| Type of Facility | Jay-cee Park | King's Park | Schoolhouse Avenue Park | Union-town Road Field | City Pool & Tot Lot | Whispering Meadows Park |
|-----------------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Playground | X | X | X | | X | X |
| Park benches | | | | | | X |
| Pavilion | | X | | | | |
| Restrooms | X | X | | | X | |
| Paths or trails | | | | | | |
| Playing field | X | X | | X | | |
| Ball diamond | X | | | | | |
| Basketball court | | X | | | | |
| Tennis court | X | X | | | | |
| Fitness equipment | | X | | | | |
| Ice skating rink (seasonal) | | | | | | |
| Swimming pool | | | | | X | |
| Interpretive displays | | | | | | |

In addition to the cultural resources described above, there are numerous local and regional individuals and organizations that promote the arts through instruction and performance. Performances and shows of both local and regional artists are held regularly in the Westminster area.

Goals and Objectives

A wide range of community facilities are provided in the City of Westminster by a variety of entities. In order to encourage the continuing, adequate provision of these facilities to meet the needs of Westminster's projected population, the following goals and objectives have been developed. Recommended actions are located here as well as in the final chapter, *Plan Implementation*.

Goal 1: Encourage increased levels of recycling and resource conservation among City residents.

Objectives and recommended actions:

1. Educate City residents regarding the importance of conserving resources and recycling materials.
 - a. Continue to mail an annual notice concerning recycling and solid waste collection in the City of Westminster.
 - b. Include the results of the Annual Recycling Report on the City's Home Page.
2. Investigate opportunities for recycling additional materials.
 - a. Become familiarized with current trends in recycling.
 - b. Coordinate with the hauler if additional recycling opportunities arise.

Goal 2: Encourage the provision of a quality education for Westminster students.

Objectives and recommended actions:

1. Coordinate with various County agencies to plan for adequate school facilities and appropriate school locations.
 - a. Phase development plan approvals and the issuance of building permits with school availability.
 - b. Maintain communications with Board of Education staff.

- c. Attend planning meetings of the Board of Education and provide input regarding the needs of the Westminster area.
- 2. Provide opportunities for students seeking to fulfill their community service hour requirements.
 - a. Consider development of a program to match Westminster government projects with interested students.

Goal 3: Encourage the provision of child care in locations that are convenient to Westminster residents and employees.

Objectives and recommended actions:

- 1. Encourage child care facilities in employment centers.
 - a. Distinguish between child care offered in a residential unit and day-care centers; and consider allowing day-care centers for more than eight children as special exceptions in residential zones.
- 2. Provide additional opportunities for child care facilities near residential areas.
 - a. Consider allowing day-care centers for more than eight children as special exceptions in residential zones.

Goal 4: Coordinate activities with local libraries, as appropriate.

Objectives and recommended actions:

- 1. Coordinate with library staff in regard to events in Westminster.
 - a. Notify library staff concerning the time and location of events .
 - b. Address the potential impact of events on the provision of library services.
- 2. Use library facilities to enhance communications with Westminster residents.
 - a. Make plans and other documents available for public review at the Westminster Branch of the library.

- b. Provide the library with brochures and other information regarding City-sponsored events.

Goal 5: Continue and expand programs which target the senior population of Westminster.

Objectives and recommended actions:

- 1. Investigate additional opportunities for senior citizens to remain involved in community activities.
 - a. Encourage the appropriate entities to provide additional senior programs.
 - b. Develop recreation facilities that will target Westminster's senior population.

Goal 6: Maintain adequate levels of public safety and emergency services.

Objectives and recommended actions:

- 1. Maintain the current officer to population ratio in the City Police Department.
 - a. Increase the size of the police force as the City population increases.
- 2. Compile and analyze data which could be used to enhance City police protection.
 - a. Collect data regarding the time and location of incidents to help schedule police officers and target police protection.
 - b. Incorporate data into the City's developing Geographic Information System.
- 3. Support the provision of adequate jail capacity in Carroll County.
- 4. Continue to support the activities of the Westminster Volunteer Fire Company.
 - a. Continue to contribute to the Westminster Volunteer Fire Company.

Goal 7: Encourage the provision of state-of-the-art communication facilities.

Objectives and recommended actions:

1. Encourage the use of telecommunications to reduce commuter traffic.
 - a. Study and consider the creation of a telecommuting center in Westminster.
 - b. Clarify language in the Zoning Ordinance to address this type of home office.
2. Develop provisions for siting telecommunications facilities.
 - a. Research innovative ways to site telecommunications facilities.
 - b. Develop regulations for the siting of telecommunications facilities.
 - c. Emphasize the aesthetics of siting telecommunications facilities through the camouflage of facilities.
3. Pursue an agreement with a telecommunications company which will install fiber optic cable throughout the City.
 - a. Contact existing providers regarding the potential for an expansion of services.
 - b. Establish geographic priorities for the provision of fiber optic cable in Westminster.

Goal 8: Expand government provided facilities as necessary to adequately serve City residents.

Objectives and recommended actions:

1. Support the implementation of the goals and objectives in the chapters which address government provided facilities.
 - a. Complete the actions which implement these goals and objectives.
2. Encourage the provision of adequate county, state, and federal services in the Westminster area.

- a. Coordinate with other jurisdictions to provide services that are needed in Westminster.

Goal 9: Provide recreational opportunities that meet the needs of Westminster residents of all ages and abilities.

Objectives and recommended actions:

1. Continue to develop a linear park in Westminster.
 - a. Explore grant opportunities for the funding of a linear park.
 - b. Plan for extensions to existing or planned linear parks.
2. Investigate additional opportunities for recreation for senior citizens.
 - a. Encourage the appropriate entities to provide additional senior programs.
 - b. Develop recreation facilities that will target Westminster's senior population.
3. Investigate opportunities for recreation for disabled citizens.
 - a. Encourage the appropriate entities to provide additional programs for disabled citizens.
 - b. Develop recreation facilities that will target Westminster's disabled population.
4. Explore recreational opportunities that do not currently exist in Westminster.
 - a. Determine the level of need for additional recreational opportunities and the issues related to particular types of activities.
5. Coordinate recreation and educational opportunities as appropriate.
 - a. Continue with the development of the Fenby Farm Quarry and Lime Kiln Park.
 - b. Encourage the coordination of historical house and business tours.

- c. Develop other opportunities to combine recreation with education.
- 6. Investigate and consider providing facilities for the recreational needs of teenagers which are not currently being met.
 - a. Expand existing recreational opportunities for teenagers.
 - b. Provide recreational activities for teenagers other than organized team sports.

Goal 10: Encourage cultural activities in Westminster.

Objectives and recommended actions:

- 1. Continue to provide City-sponsored cultural events.
 - a. Enhance events such as the Flower and Jazz Festival, a Month of Sundays concert series, and historic walking tours.
- 2. Continue to coordinate events with the Carroll County Arts Council.
 - a. Enhance the Art in the Park event.
 - b. Explore opportunities for further coordination with the Carroll County Arts Council.
- 3. Establish working relationships with organizations which support cultural events.
 - a. Coordinate with such organizations so that events can be advertised on the City's Home Page and an appropriate level of police protection can be made available.
 - b. Encourage the promotion of Westminster's downtown commercial area during cultural events.
- 4. Explore additional opportunities to enhance the arts in Westminster.
 - a. Provide additional cultural events as appropriate.